

Testimony
Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
February 27, 2023

In support of House Bill 5673
Jahmal Henderson, Connecticut Communist Party USA

Good afternoon Senator Fonfara, Representative Horn, and distinguished members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee.

My name is Jahmal Henderson and I live in New Haven. I am speaking on behalf of the Connecticut Communist Party. I am a member of the Recovery for All coalition. I am testifying in strong support of House Bill 5673: An Act Concerning The Reformation Of Certain Taxes And Tax Equity.

Connecticut isn't just the nation's wealthiest state, it's also among the most unequal states. Affluent towns like Darien and Greenwich stand in a big contrast to the realities of deeply poor cities like Bridgeport, Hartford, and my city New Haven where many people of color reside.

Connecticut's inequality is related to the upside down tax structure in our state. The wealthiest actually pay a lower rate of combined taxes than the rest of us.

The Newhallville neighborhood that I live in is the heart of the African American community in New Haven. Even though the people who live here work hard, often several jobs to try and make ends meet, there is a lot of poverty. We deal with inequalities from lack of living wage jobs, lack of affordable housing, lack of affordable health care, and the need for more youth resources.

When these inequities were magnified for all to see during the pandemic, and as essential workers like myself said enough is enough, a commitment was made by state government to take concrete steps to close the racial and economic disparity gaps.

To meet that commitment we cannot continue in the old ways. There is an extraordinary necessity and opportunity in this legislative session to enact changes that will make us more equal and strengthen our entire state for years to come. That is what the package of provisions in HB 5673 is all about.

It is urgent that you make the changes in HB 5673 that will begin to tax the wealthiest in our state their fair share. That funding is vitally needed in communities like mine that have long been under funded even though the need is greatest. Key resources needed in my neighborhood of Newhallville to combat problems of poverty include investments in mental health resources, youth programs, affordable housing and similar components so that we can survive and thrive.

I urge you to vote in favor of HB 5673, help close the racial and economic gap, and make our entire state stronger for everyone.